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No. 6

# Miss Cleopatra

A Farce in Three Acts

(Adapted from "Les Amours de Cleopatre")

BY

ARTHUR SHIRLEY

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IN THREE ACTS.

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## MISS CLEOPATRA.

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*Produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, June 25th, 1891.*

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### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Simon Rawkins, ..... MR. HARRY PAULTON.  
(*A retired pork butcher.*)

Edwin Vane, ..... MR. FRED MERVIN.  
(*A male flirt.*)

Bob Lupton, ..... MR. SCOTT BUIST.  
(*His friend.*)

Jelks, ..... MR. ALGERNON NEWARK.  
(*Rawkin's page boy.*)

Montague Mowler, ..... MR. H. DE LANGE.  
(*A blighted tragedian.*)

Scupper, ..... MR. STEPHEN CAFFREY.  
(*Of the Bargate-on-Sea police force.*)

---

Cleopatra Collins, ..... MISS MAUD MILTON.  
(*Edwin's old flame.*)

Milly Rawkins, ..... MISS LILLIAN HINGSTON.  
(*Edwin's new love.*)

Mrs. Emma Rawkins, ..... MISS BELLA CUTHBERT.  
(*Her mother.*)

---

Landlord of "The Compass"—MR. E. STIRLING.

---

(Picture posters by Hill, Siffken & Co., London, N.)

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GIFT OF

ROBERT GOULD SHAW,

APR 28 1926

# MISS CLEOPATRA

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## ACT I.

### ESCAPED.

(As curtain rises, MUSIC: "The Bogle Man.")

(A Flat in Bloomsbury Mansions.)

**SCENE.**—Plainly furnished room at back; window to open; roofs seen outside; curtains; door to inner room R. L. Fireplace, clock on mantelpiece, also higher up stage a secretaire. (Door to passage L. Few boxes or drawers R. and L.) Stage dark and empty. As curtain rises, MUSIC; piano.

Enter EDWIN VANE and BOB LUPTON L. C., mysteriously, with hats on and overcoats buttoned up; evening dress underneath.)

EDW. Nobody's seen us come up. Shut the door.

BOB. Got a match? (He stumbles over chair. Gas half up.)

EDW. Be careful! (Striking match to light candle. Lights up. Looking at watch.) Just gone eight. She'd be at the Christy Minstrels by this time. Now for my search.

(Voice of CLEOPATRA heard singing off R.)

BOB. She's not gone! Jee-roosalem!

(Gas down; EDWIN blows out candle in BOB'S face; he coughs.)

EDW. (Intensely.) If you cough I'll choke you.

BOB. If I don't cough I'll choke myself.

EDW. (Dragging BOB to back.) Hide!

(They disappear behind curtains. Lights up. Enter R. Cleopatra, a stylish young woman dressed for walking; she carries lighted candle and open letter.)

CLEO. Am I too late or too early? Let us see what Edwin's letter says. (Reading.) "Dear Cleo.—I send a seat for the Christy's to-night, balcony stall No. 90. I shall join you in stall 91, but not till after the performance begins—detained at the office till late.—Your loving Edwin. P.S. Don't miss the first song. 'Close the Shutters, Baby's Bathing.' It

is a sweetly pretty ballad." (Looking at clock.) Gracious, I have missed it! Never mind; Edwin won't know I arrived late, as I am sure to be there before him.

(She goes out L., shutting and locking door on the outside.)

EDW. A narrow squeak! (Listening at keyhole.) We are safe now. Light the candle again.

BOB. (Strikes match.) You won't be offended if I ask: What the devil does all this mean?

EDW. Bob Lupton, I have stood you a dinner at the "Cri." on the condition that for one hour you sell yourself to me, body and soul. I claim the fulfilment of your compact.

BOB. (Doubtfully.) Well, what am I to do?

EDW. Take off your coat, turn up your sleeves, and help me ransack this place from top to bottom!

BOB. What?

EDW. Every nook, corner, crevice and cranny.

BOB. I see—You have turned burglar! Don't ask me to help—I'm off.

EDW. Don't be an ass, Bob. You have come up to town from Goose Green on purpose to be my best man, haven't you?

BOB. Is burglary part of my duties?

EDW. Yes. To-night at eleven we go to old Rawkins' party; to-morrow at ten you give me away at church; but before that there's work to be done here in this room.

BOB. But whose room is it?

EDW. Cleopatra's. I'm her Antony!

BOB. Come out of the classics.

EDW. I will. You know how susceptible I am? Well, three years ago I fell a victim to the bright eyes of Miss Cleopatra Collins, the tenant of these rooms.

BOB. Cleopatra?

EDW. Yes; she has an angelic face, but a devilish temper. Met her first at an amateur dramatic club—she was playing "Mrs. Bouncer" in "Box and Cox"; we both got bad notices in the "Era," and from that moment there was a sympathy between us—I fell in love.

BOB. For the fortieth time.

EDW. No; the thirty-ninth. We quarrelled; she got a good notice in the "Stage" and I didn't; she laughed at it; her mirth rankled, and I soon found out I had made a mistake; then I tried to break it off, but she wouldn't give me a chance; she even bottled up her temper.

BOB. Intending to uncork it when she'd landed you.

EDW. Have you ever seen a bluebottle tied by a boy to a bit of cotton? A dog with a kettle on his tail? Cleopatra is my kettle!

BOB. And you are afraid of her boiling over?

EDW. She's as jealous as a female Othello; and if she only knew I was engaged to another girl!

BOB. Haven't you told her?

EDW. No; and to-morrow I am to be married, and you are to be my best man!

BOB. Need she know?

EDW. I hope not. If she did, she'd be there and mop the aisle with me during the service.

BOB. It would look bad.

EDW. Last night I had a happy thought. If I only could get my letters back again I should feel safe from figuring in a breach of promise case.

BOB. That sort of think does make a fellow look a fool.

EDW. So to-day I sent a letter asking her to meet me at the Christy's, whilst all the time I meant to sneak in here with you, and get back my letters whilst she was out of the way.

BOB. Risky.

EDW. But necessary. She's just the sort of girl to pose for a plaintiff before a susceptible jury of my fellow-countrymen. She's even equal to bamboozling the judge, mashing the usher, and hoodwinking the counsel, until they agreed I was an inhuman monster and knocked me down for £10,000 damages.

BOB. Which, as your income is £4 a week, would take a hundred years to pay off.

EDW. It would simply mean ruin. Then there is another chance for me—if, besides my own letters, I could only find one tiny little scrap of a note from some other fellow—

BOB. Is it likely?

ED. I only say if. Oh, the scene between us would be thrilling. "Madam," I should say, "what is this? Don't tell me it is 'nothing.' Farewell for ever, perfidious woman—you have broken my heart, and I must fly from your presence, as I am due at my other girl's father's." Ha, ha!

BOB. Bravo!

EDW. Now for our search. (They simultaneously turn out all drawers, boxes, &c., about the place, causing great litter.)

BOB. A hat. (On R.)

EDW. (Eagerly.) Male? (On L.)

BOB. With feathers!

EDW. (Disappointed.) Oh!

BOB. Gloves!

ED. What size?

BOB. Eight and a quarter! A tobacco pouch! Does she smoke?

EDW. Ah! (Examining it.) Mine! I left it behind the day before yesterday. (Puts it in his pocket.) A photo! (Looks at it.) Mine.

BOB. A locket—hair inside.

EDW. (After examination.) Mine! (They rummage more desperately than before.) Some letters—mine—all mine—I'll keep these—it's very hard, very hard that she should be so shockingly faithful to me. Most fellows have to complain that their girls carry on with other fellows—here have I hit on probably the only unflirtable girl in Bloomsbury. Rummage away, there are hundreds more of my letters to get—I mustn't leave one behind for her to build a case on. Oh! how I should enjoy being jealous. What's that?

BOB. A step on the stairs. (Listening.)

EDW. It's Cleo. come back! Quick! In there. (Pointing R.)

BOB. What for?

EDW. And remember that when you come out you don't know me!

BOB. I don't understand.

EDW. Go in, can't you! (Hustles Bob into room R.)

(Enter CLEOPATRA with hat on L. C.)

CLEO. Not admitted after eight. I'll never encourage those black wretches by taking one of their orders again. Edwin, you here!

EDW. (With dignity.) Yes; I am here! (C.)

CLEO. Whatever have you been doing to the place? Everything is upside down.

EDW. (Aside.) Now for it; audacity befriend me.

CLEO. Well?

EDW. Miss Cleopatra Collins, I am jealous.

CLEO. You jealous. That's rich!

EDW. (Loudly.) I'd sooner be a dog and bay the moon—

CLEO. Well—don't bay me!

EDW. Cleopatra, I have a rival.

CLEO. Nonsense. Ha, ha, ha!

EDW. An anonymous letter has revealed all—opened my hitherto blind eyes.

CLEO. Show it to me.

EDW. I destroyed it without reading it.

CLEO. Eh?

EDW. After reading it. I know now that you have two strings to your bow. But learn, madam, that this string has snapped!

CLEO. What's the other string like?—it would interest me to know.

EDW. Oh, I have his full description; never fear. Eyes, ordinary; nose, extraordinary; clothes—(here EDWIN describes BOB'S dress.) Now you know why I sent you to the Christy's in order to come here and find proofs of your perfidy.

CLEO. (Calmly.) Have you found them?

EDW. Not yet; but never fear, madam, I shall; and then

farewell for ever. (Pretending to listen.) Madam, I believe you have my rival even now concealed in that room.

CLEO. How dare you!—but, no; you shan't make me angry. Ha, ha! Go and look for yourself.

EDW. I should kill him if I went—you open the door.

CLEO. With pleasure. (Opens door R. and screams as BOB appears.) A man! (Crosses to L.)

EDW. (C.) Ah! my heart, my poor lacerated heart told me so!

CLEO. (L.) He's a thief—a burglar!

EDW. Yes; he has stolen my happiness, burgled my peace of mind.

BOB. (R.) Excuse me. (Advances apologetically.)

EDW. (Fiercely). Not one word, sir. Leave this room—the room you have wrecked and ruined! (Aside.) Meet me at the Criterion, old chap.

BOB. (Embarrassed.) But, I say—

EDW. Enough! I accept no apologies! (To CLEOPATRA.) Was the description so inaccurate? Eyes ordinary, nose extraordinary, clothes—(Repeats details of BOB'S dress.)

CLEO. Oh! Edwin, dear, I swear to you—

EDW. Enough! Madam, the dream of my life has faded, my faith in woman's truth is shattered. Adieu for ever!

CLEO. Oh! Edwin! (Turning to BOB fiercely.) This is your fault; can't you speak, idiot?

BOB. If you will allow me—

EDW. I will not allow you. Duelling is out of fashion, but I have still a fist to thrash such Don Juans as you. (Aside.) It's all right. (Aloud.) Take that! (Strikes BOB.)

BOB. (Angrily.) You are going too far!

CLEO. Gentlemen, I implore you—it is some fearful mistake.

EDW. We cannot fight in the presence of a lady. Give me your card, sir!

BOB. Anything you like. (Gives a card nervously; another drops on the floor.)

EDW. Now go; miserable, paltry, sneaking poltroon! Go before I crush you beneath my heel. (Aside.) Call a cab! wait for me outside.

BOB. (Aside.) You have made me look like a fool.

(CLEOPATRA stoops and picks up card.)

EDW. No more words, sir.

BOB. (With a smile at CLEOPATRA.) Good evening; I hope that at some future—

EDW. How dare you apologize—get out! (Pushes BOB off L. C., then comes back and calmly sits on the sofa and looks at his watch.) Nine-fifteen.

CLEO. (Coolly.) With a little more practice you will play the part very well.

EDW. Do not address me, madam. Return me my letters—here are yours.

CLEO. But your friend is rather a bad actor.

EDW. My friend! Callous to the last.

CLEO. (Holding up BOB'S card.) Robert Lupton is your friend, isn't he?

EDW. The devil! (Finding his ruse discovered.)

CLEO. I daresay you had his assistance, too. Edwin, you need not keep up the comedy; I see it all—you want to break off our engagement.

EDW. Well, since you put it that way—

CLEO. You no longer love me—

EDW. I would not have said such a thing for worlds.

CLEO. (With real feeling.) I understand; you—you—  
(Bursts into tears.)

EDW. (Aside.) Now for the water-cart business. (Looking at watch.) Nine-thirty, and Bob waiting outside.

CLEO. Oh, how miserable you have made me! (Sobbing.)

EDW. Come, come, Cleo. Be reasonable—we all have to be reasonable sometimes. Love doesn't last forever except in penny novelettes—they work it so there—just to keep up the interest, and you know there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.

CLEO. (Suddenly rising and dropping her tearful mood.) You should be the last to repeat that proverb, for your conduct has been "fishy" indeed! (Cross L.) Speak plainly; there can only be one reason for this change—you love another girl.

EDW. Well, you see, it's like this.

CLEO. Oh, if only I had her here now! My nails seem sprouting into tiger talons. What is her name—her address? Quick!

EDW. Ah! Belinda Smith, Blackheath.

CLEO. I don't believe you. (Cross to R.)

EDW. Well, since you take it so—of course— (Picks up hat; goes up and to L.)

CLEO. Don't go. (Aside.) He's deceived me—I will deceive him! (Aloud.) Don't think, Edwin, that I mean to destroy your happiness. It was a blow at first, but I'm getting over it by degrees. I will learn to be resigned—to think that you are too good for me; you are too good.

EDW. Well.

CLEO. Too handsome—you are too handsome.

EDW. No. (Apologetically.)

CLEO. Too everything. You are too everything.

EDW. Forgive me.

CLEO. Yes, if you tell me all, and promise that if I give you up you will marry her.

EDW. I promise that.

CLEO. Soon?

EDW. To-morrow.

CLEO. Oh, thank you for doing so much to oblige me.

EDW. Now you are reasonable, we will talk it over like sensible people.

CLEO. Who is she?

EDW. Milly Rawkins.

CLEO. Sweet name!

EDW. I met her at the Zoo.

CLEO. Not in the monkey house?

EDW. Her father is rich!

CLEO. Of course.

EDW. Made his money out of sausages.

CLEO. How romantic!

EDW. Yes, he has revolutionized the polony industry and lifted meat chopping into the regions of science and poetry.

CLEO. It wanted it.

EDW. He it was who first introduced the world-renowned ham flavouring that rendered the universe independent of the pig—with his latest invention he can impart the flavour of a rasher of the best bacon to a thin deal board.

CLEO. Are you not proud of him?

EDW. I hate pride. (Aside.) She is reasonable. (Aloud.) Do you know, I was doubtful how you'd take it. I even had the marriage put off on the pretext that my sister, Mrs. Jellicoe, couldn't come, because her youngest child had the measles; but to-morrow I shall lead Milly to the altar, sister or no sister, measles or no measles.

CLEO. Brave boy!

EDW. My future father-in-law gives a party to-night.

CLEO. (Intensely.) That is why you have been sham-pooed.

EDW. Yes. (Looking at his watch, aside.) Ten o'clock!

(Aloud.) Forget me, though I can never forgive you.

CLEO. I was never worthy of you.

EDW. Never; but that shall not keep me now.

CLEO. Don't go yet, dear—may I call you dear?

EDW. For exactly two minutes longer.

(CLEOPATRA drags him back to sofa R.)

CLEO. Sit down here as you used to do. (She forces him down onto footstool, and sits close to him, taking up her work.) Let me work as I used to do.

EDW. (Looks at his watch.) Ten-fifteen.

CLEO. (Beginning to sing.)—

“When other lips and other hearts  
Their tales of love shall tell.”

EDW. Ten-seventeen. (He attempts to rise; CLEO-PATRA pricks him with her needle; he sits down again.)

CLEO. (Singing.)—



"Then you'll remember me!"

(A peculiar whistle heard outside.)

EDW. That's Bob's whistle. (Whistle changes to "If you want to know the time ask a policeman.") (Aside.) I know the time; it's 10.25.

CLEO. Oh, I won't keep you much longer. I'm reasonable, and all I desire now is to know that you are happy.

EDW. I'll try to be for your sake.

CLEO. Tell me, is she very pretty?

EDW. Eight hundred pounds a year in her own right!

CLEO. Fair or dark?

EDW. A golden auburn.

CLEO. Not carrotty—oh! say she is not carrotty!

EDW. No, but her father is bald; ostentatiously bald. (Aside.) And he's waiting for me now.

CLEO. (Quietly.) Where does he live?

EDW. Oh! at his villa—the Lilacs, Peckham Rye. Now, really, I must go—good-bye! I leave you my blessing. If you ever play again with the Bloomsbury Thespians—send me some tickets.

CLEO. (Changing her manner.) Ha! ha! do you really think I am going to let you go (standing with back to door after taking out the key) to your sausage parties?

EDW. What?

CLEO. You have told me all I want to know—name, address, everything! You shan't be married to-morrow—you shan't turn up at that party to-night!

EDW. (Sternly.) Open that door, madam; I command you.

CLEO. Never! never! never!

EDW. We shall see.

(EDWIN is about to seize CLEOPATRA when she flings the key she holds out of the window. Small crash. BOB is heard to give a yell of pain outside.)

CLEO. As you won't marry me, you shan't marry anybody.

EDW. Don't be a silly little silly! (Aside.) What will they say?

CLEO. Ah, I know—we will die together! (She rushes to cabinet; seizes small vial.) Drink! (Tragically.)

EDW. No, thanks!

CLEO. It's only prussic acid!

EDW. I never take it—don't agree with me.

CLEO. Craven! You fear to die with her who once loved you. Fear nothing; I will die alone.

EDW. I dare say.

CLEO. You will then be free to marry your Milly Rawkins. Farewell for ever! (She sinks back on sofa.)

EDW. Oh! farewell—I mean good night.

CLEO. (Aside.) The wretch! He'd let me do it!

EDW. Good night! Won't you say good night? (Holds out

hand, but Cleopatra remains motionless.) Cleo! She hasn't done it? Cleo, open your eyes! I didn't mean what I said. I don't want anybody but you. Oh! this is dreadful. (Kneels at her feet.) Only say that you are not dead, and I will marry you.

CLEO. (Feebly.) I am not dead.

EDW. Your devotion has disarmed my base intentions. I give up Milly; I cast her father's world-famed sausages to the winds.

CLEO. Bless you for those words.

EDW. You must have thought me a monster.

CLEO. I did.

EDW. But it was only a sort of joke. Ha, ha!

CLEO. Dear Edwin! (Places her hand convulsively on Edwin's head.)

EDW. (Aside.) She's taking all the curl out.

CLEO. Let us leave London—seek some secluded spot.

EDW. Yes; I'll go home and pack up, get a special license, and settle down in the country, surrounded by poetry and pigs. Open the door. (Crosses to door.)

CLEO. Don't go yet.

EDW. You doubt me still? (Crosses back to R.) I will stay —(aside)—as I can't help myself. (Aloud.) And make you blush that you ever suspected me. Give me pen, ink and paper, and before your very eyes I will write to old Rawkins, tell him I do not love and can never marry his ham-flavored child. I will go out and buy a penny stamp. Back in five minutes. (Crosses L.) Open the door.

CLEO. I have a stamp here, dearest.

EDW. (Aside.) Sold again. (Crosses back.)

CLEO. Here is pen and ink.

EDW. Not now; b-r-r! How cold it is; that shampooing I had has given me a chill.

CLEO. Your hands feel hot!

EDW. But my feet are cold as ice.

CLEO. Let me put this over them. Lie on the sofa. Are you better now? Shall I send aunt for the doctor?

EDW. I am sleepy. It's bronchitis or brain fever. Yes; send for a doctor. (Aside.) I would give something to know how they are getting on at Peckham Rye. (Groans.) Oh!

CLEO. You haven't enough rugs over you. Here; your in-  
verness will do. (She piles on more things.)

EDW. I'm still shivering—hark at my te-te-teeth ch-ch-chat-  
tering. Can I have some gruel?

CLEO. The fire's out, but I will go downstairs and ask the  
landlady.

EDW. Do; it might sa-sa-save my li-li-life.

CLEO. I will get the gruel; don't move. (MUSIC.)

EDW. I can't.

CLEO. Don't uncover yourself. I'll give you gruel!

EDW. Gr-gr-gruel! Oh!

(Exit Cleopatra R. Directly she is off, Edwin leaps up erect and rushes to window.)

EDW. I must get away! Couldn't I tie the curtains in knots, and like Jack Sheppard escape by the window? (A key is put in door and BOB LUPTON enters cautiously L.) Who's that? Bob! You've got the key?

BOB. Yes; I caught it on my nose. (Rubbing nose.) And as you didn't come down, thought I'd come up to ask—

EDW. What a stroke of luck! (Forcing BOB toward couch.) Lie down.

BOB. What for? I don't understand.

EDW. It don't matter. (Piles all rugs, &c., on Bob.) Don't get up, but groan—groan for your life. Saved! saved!

(Exit EDWIN hurriedly L.)

MUSIC (piano):—"They're After Me."

BOB. I don't want to groan.

(Enter CLEOPATRA R. BOB sees her and hides his head, which is in position of EDWIN'S feet when on the same couch. She places her hand on his feet and pats them for his head.)

CLEO. Haven't I been quick? The kitchen kettle was boiling, so I've got the gruel and a nice hot water bottle. (Endeavoring to lift rug, which BOB holds.) He sleeps. Poor dear, this will do you good: it's nearly red hot. (She places bottle by BOB'S head and he leaps in the air with a shriek of agony, casting coverings right and left.) (Astonished.) It isn't Edwin, it's the burglar! Wretch! She belabors him furiously, he endeavoring to escape all the time, encumbered by wraps, &c.)

QUICK CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

MUSIC: "We Are All Nodding."

Scene.—Drawing room at Mr. Rawkins'. Doors C and R. Round table C. Towards L. small table in R. corner, on which is lady's work basket. Furniture gaudy and expensive. Chairs, arm chairs and sofas disposed about stage. A large presentation piece of plate on table R., subject, "Dog sitting up on hind legs." Picture on easel R. of door of Mr. Rawkins—very grotesque portrait.

On rising of curtain. Mr and Mrs. Rawkins and all guests are discovered asleep in various attitudes. Lullaby music to commence.

(JELKS enters R., looking only half awake, then yawning.)

JELKS. Mr. Rawkins! (RAWKINS snores.) 'E don't 'ear me; not 'im. They're all wropt in the arms of more fuss! Rawkins and Company. This is RAWKINS and these are his sleeping partners. (Omnes snore.) (Calling.) Miss Milly! She don't snore; women never do until after they are married. They have been expecting young Mr. Vane to come, and have dropt off while waiting. Old Rawkins sent me to look for him, but he's not at home. It's time that they were woke up. Master, Mr. Rawkins! (Takes up bell and rings it by Rawkins' head.) A pound of pork! (RAWKINS opens his eyes, and omnes slowly wake up. Business.)

RAWK. Come in! Well, Jelks, have you found 'im? Any news?

JELKS. No, sir; I've been to the gent's lodgings, but he went out before eight o'clock last night.

RAWK. But it's six o'clock in the morning now.

JELKS. Well, sir, I waited about, hoping he'd come home, until at last a policeman took me up for loitering with intent to commit a "burglary." He took me to the station, where I explained what I wanted, and at last the sergeant let me go.

MRS. R. You quite understand, Mr. Rawkins, this is no fault of mind—oh, no. You would have the poor gal engaged to the fellow, though I was opposed to the match from the first.

RAWK. Oh, Emmà! do give your jawbone a rest—nag, nag, nag!

MRS. R. Me nag! I like that!

RAWK. The question is, where's Edwin? Where is my future son-in-law?

MRS. R. That's what I want to know!

OMNES. That's what we all want to know. (JELKS goes to window, opens it and lets in daylight; extinguishes candles and then yawns.)

RAWK. (Goes to Mowler, a typical tragedian of the old school.) Mowler, you are a man of brains—what do you say to it?

MOWLER. (In deep voice.) I say —— (Yawns)

RAWK. Don't yawn. (He yawns himself; all guests do the same.) There; see what you've done! (To Jelks.) Br-r-r! We'll have breakfast, Jelks; coffee and toast.

JELKS. Yes, sir. (Yawns.)

RAWK. Do that once more, and you are discharged without a character.

(Exit Jelks C.)

Mrs. R. May I ask, Mr. Rawkins, are we to sit up any longer, or may we go to bed?

RAWK. Oh! go to ——

Mrs. R. Not before my child ——

RAWK. Emma, my speckled peach, you'd provoke a saint. Ain't I nearly drove out of my "compos mentis" as it is?

(Exit Mrs. Rawkins.)

RAWK. Friends, I must apologize to you, but it ain't my fault—follow Jelks into the breakfast room. Go on, Mowler; 'ave a blow-out at the breakfast table!

MOW. Rawkins, I will proceed to rehearse a front scene with some of your celebrated sausages!

(Exit Mowler C.)

(Exeunt Guests C., Milly remaining.)

RAWK. Now, Milly, get my coat, hat and stick. I'll see for myself what all this means.

MILLY. It's no use, pa. If you found Edwin I would not marry him after this.

RAWK. Don't be a fool, child! Suppose he's met with an accident—got killed

MILLY. He could have sent a message!

RAWK. Suppose he's had a telegram to say that his sister, Mrs. Jellicoe, has arrived from America? P'raps he's had to go and meet her at Liverpool.

MILLY. I believe nothing of the kind. It's done on purpose to humiliate us. (Bell.)

RAWK. What's that? The bell! Perhaps it's Edwin!

MILLY. If he's not killed, I'll never look over this insult. If he's dead, I forgive him once and for all.

RAWK. I've only one request to make, and I make it firmly but quietly—don't be a hass!

(Enter Bob Lupton diffidently R.)

BOB. Mr. and Mrs. Rawkins, I presume?

RAWK. I am 'im!

(Enter Mrs. Rawkins.)

Mrs. R. Why, you ain't Mr. Vane what we are expecting?

BOB. No, my name is Lupton—Robert Lupton. (Aside.) What a nice girl! (Noticing Milly.)

MILLY. What a lovely mustache.

BOB. (To Mr. Rawkins.) I'm sort of ambassador from my friend Edwin Vane.

RAWK. My future son-in-law! How is he—dead?

BOB. Not quite.

MRS. R. We have been expecting him all night. It's pretty behavior on his part.

RAWK. Emma, my beloved angel, leave this to me.

BOB. He begs me to tender his sincere apologies.

RAWK. Well, why didn't he turn up? Some severe accident, I hope! I know he hasn't been home all night, for my servant has been to his place.

BOB. We started for here about nine last night, and as we were walking to the station he was seized.

MRS. R. By the police?

BOB. No; by the complaint.

RAWK. What was it?

BOB. (Aside.) I forget. (Aloud.) You know how agonizing it is. I thought he would have gone mad.

RAWK. Toothache?

MRS. R. Neuralgia?

BOB. Exactly.

RAWK. It does come on sudden. I remember once when I was standing in my shop——

MRS. R. Let the gentleman explain!

RAWK. Ain't I letting 'im!

MRS. R. No; you keep on interpolating of yourself.

RAWK. Go on; 'url insults at may 'ead!

MILLY. (Interposing.) Pa! Ma! (To Bob.) Go on, sir!

BOB. We called a cab, but he couldn't get in—it was so swollen.

RAWK. The cab?

BOB. No; his face. So I led him gently to my lodgings, and put his feet in mustard and water.

MRS. R. For neuralgia?

RAWK. Whose interpolating now? It's plain enough!

MRS. R. No, it ain't, Simon.

RAWK. Yus, it is. He put the cab in mustard and water—I mean his feet in the cab——

BOB. I had no other remedy handy; but still he swelled and swelled.

RAWK. Pore boy; he must be a sight by this time!

BOB. You wouldn't know him—face's like that. (Pantomiming swelling.)

RAWK. How he must have suffered! Let us go to your place and see him.

MILLY. Is he still in mustard?

BOB. No; I took him out and put him in a hansom. He's at the door now.

RAWK. He'll catch cold—fetch him up.

BOB. Let me go. (Aside.) I must see him first.

RAWK. Not at all. Jelks.

(Enter Jelks C.)

Go down to the door, and in a cab you will find a swollen gentleman. Bring him up carefully.

JELKS. Yes, sir. (Aside.) A swollen gentleman! S'pose he means a swell.

(Exit Jelks R. to E.)

BOB. If they question him before I give him the tip it will be all U-P. (Aloud.) We must make him comfortable. Something soft to put his head on.

RAWK. (Bustling about.) Yes; something to put his soft head on.

MRS. R. P'raps you'll leave this to me, Rawkins. In times of sickness there's nobody like a woman.

RAWK. Yes; as the poet says:—

“Oh, woman, in our times of ease  
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,  
When trouble comes to make us curse  
She lets us have it ten times worse!”

(Antimacassars, cushions on sofa.)

BOB. (Aside.) I'll just slip down and tell him what I've said.

(Bob about to go as Edwin enters R. to E., between two servants, limping and groaning.)

EDW. Thank you—oh!—thank you.

BOB. (Aside.) Shut up; it isn't in your leg.

EDW. Eh?

BOB. Hold your jaw!

EDW. (Aside to Bob.) I told you sciatica!

BOB. I told them neuralgia! Do just as well. Puff your cheek out.

EDW. How can I?

BOB. (Seizing walnut from fruit plate.) Put this in.

(EDWIN puts walnut in left cheek.)

RAWK. My dear boy, we are so sorry.

EDW. (Speaking with difficulty.) Dolt belchul id.

(Enter GUESTS C.; EDWIN sits in arm chair put C.)

RAWK. Friends, he's come at last!

MRS. R. We hope you hain't put yourself out at all, Mr. Vane.

MILLY. (Aside.) He looks horribly ugly; such a contrast to his friend!

MRS. R. Quite a superior sort of young man!

BOB. (Aside to EDWIN.) Better say something to them.

EDW. Ladies and gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am—

RAWK. (With big handkerchief in his hand.) Yes, yes! Let me tie up your face, my boy, with this.

MRS. R. Simon, leave this to me! (They struggle behind chair as to who shall tie up his head.)

EDW. Do, do! (Refusing to have his head enveloped.)

BOB. Better not irritate him—awful sufferer—irritable—very!

RAWK. Well, it certainly is the swellest swelled face that I ever did see. (Examining EDWIN.)

EDW. (To MILLY.) I hope, Miss Billy, that you will excuse my absence.

BOB. Don't talk; she don't understand a word you are saying. Try pantomime. (EDWIN expresses in pantomime that he still loves MILLY, but, owing to the fearful agony, he could not be present last night. Business.)

MILLY. I don't know what you mean—do you, ma?

MRS. R.—I never was so good at making out gesticulations.

EDW. (To BOB, and taking walnut from his mouth.) This is all your fault. Why couldn't you have left the pain where I put it—in my leg?

BOB. This is gratitude! Put what walnut back again, or they will discover all. (EDWIN replaces walnut, but in his right cheek.)

RAWK. I believe the swelling has begun to go down already. It's hardly noticeable. Hullo, it's gone!

MRS. R. Nonsense; it's worse than ever—look here!

BOB. He's put it in the wrong side, now!

EDW. Pade shifted—cubs and godes quite sudded.

RAWK. Just now it was in the left cheek, now it's the right!

BOB. Yes, that's so; often like that in bad cases.

MRS. R. Haven't you had the gout do much the same thing?

RAWK. But it never shifted so quick as this!

EDW. Wordse than forty gouts. (Tapping his cheek.)

BOB. Can't you shut up? (EDWIN retorts angrily, then coughs violently.) Goodness, he's swallowing it!

(Then all pat EDWIN on the back.)

RAWK. You'll be better soon—why, it's gone altogether! (Looking both sides of EDWIN.)

MRS. R. Gone!

RAWK. (Showing EDWIN'S face.) Look!

MRS. R. Wonderful!



EDW. (To MILLY.) Oh! Milly dearest; if you knew all I have suffered!

MILLY. I want to know nothing! (She flounces away from EDWIN.)

EDW. Mrs. Rawkins, accept my apologies.

MRS. R. No need, I am sure! (She goes away.)

RAWK. Just to liven things up a bit, I should like our friend Mowler to give us a "ressertation." (Mowler is a bald-headed individual with black mustache and generally tragic air.) (To GUESTS.) Me and Mowler, gentlemen, was boys together. We started on life's thorny path at the same time, and left the Ball's Pond Road to seek our fortunes. He took to the stage, I took to sausages—hacting is hart; sausages is science.

MRS. R. We don't want any naughty biography.

RAWK. I'm not ashamed of my bringing up, Emma, if you are.

MRS. R. That's right; throw my posterity into my teeth—and before company, too!

RAWK. Now Mowler; let her go!

MOWLER. (Taking C. and clearing his throat.) Hum! "Little Jim"—

(Enter JELKS, R. to E. MUSIC, "They're After Me.")

JELKS. (Announcing.) Mrs. Jellicoe!

EDW. (Surprised.) My sister!

RAWK. Why, you said she could not come!

EDW. Some mistake!

(MOWLER, being neglected, returns to his seat.)

RAWK. Better go and see about it. (EDWIN advances towards door as CLEOPATRA enters R. to E. She is most fashionably dressed.)

EDW. Cleopatra!

BOB. Oh, gracious!

RAWK. So pleased to see you, Mrs. Jellicoe; we didn't expect you. Your last letter said baby had taken up with the measles.

CLEO. So it did, but it soon dropped them. (Smiling.) And how are your small Germans?

RAWK. Oh, I've retired from business. The guardians of St. Skilly presented me with this as a testimonial to the purity of my sausages. (Showing presentation.)

CLEO. So I heard before I left America.

RAWK. How kind of you to come! She's very nice, Edwin's sister is!

MRS. R. I don't like the look of her!

BOB. (To EDWIN.) She means mischief!

EDW. I'm in a cold perspiration!

RAWK. Well, my boy, you don't seem pleased to see your sister!

CLEO. Dear Teddy! He always was so shy! Kiss me, Teddy, dear.

EDW. Certainly. (Aside to CLEOPATRA.) Woman, what do you want here?

CLEO. (Aside to EDWIN.) Vengeance!

EDW. Cat!

CLEO. (Aside.) Beware my claws!

RAWK. Let me introduce—the old Dutch clock.

MRS. R. No. vulgarity, Simon, I beg.

CLEO. Charmed, I am sure. Ah, here's a face I know. Mr. Lupton, we've met before—such a pleasant evening. Do you remember that joke about the hot-water bottle? Ha, ha!

BOB. (Forcing laughter.) Ha, ha! (Aside to Edwin.) You'd better laugh, too.

EDW. (Funereally.) Ha, ha!

CLEO. But you never heard how the joke finished. Ha, ha!

RAWK. You are waking of us up, Mrs. Jellicoe. Now let me introduce you to my daughter Milly, your future sister-in-law.

CLEO. Delighted! Kiss me, darling. (Aside.) Wax doll! (She kisses MILLY viciously.)

MILLY. Oh!

EDW. (To BOB.) I believe she's bitten her.

RAWK. (Aside.) Such a capital matched pair. He loves her to extraction.

CLEO. (Laughing convulsively.) Ha, ha!

RAWK. (Aside to EDWIN.) What a peculiar laugh your sister has.

EDW. It's been in our family for years!

RAWK. You haven't heard about Edwin's accident?

MRS. R. He never turned up here at all last night. We all went to sleep waiting for him.

CLEO. Ha, ha! How droll!

EDW. That laugh again.

RAWK. Face swelled big as a balloon.

CLEO. How beautiful! Ha, ha!

RAWK. (Aside to EDWIN.) I do not like your sister's laugh.

EDW. Take no notice. Long journey from New York—sea voyage upset her—measles as well—been in the family for years.

RAWK. I'll introduce her to Mowler—they are both perfects, and perhaps they'll do a bit of play acting together. (Goes up to MOWLER.)

CLEO. (Aside to EDWIN.) Well, brother Teddy; you seem surprised!

EDW. No; only disgusted.

CLEO. I don't want to make a scene, so I give you five minutes to break it off with old Polonius there.

EDW. Cleopatra!

CLEO. Or else an action for breach of promise. Picture yourself in the witness box—under cross-examination by Carson!

EDW. Oh! (Goes down corner.)

RAWK. Friends! Mr. Montague Mowler will now give us that "ressertation." (MOWLER rises and comes C.)

MOWL. Hum! (Clearing throat.)

CLEO. (Aside to EDWIN.) Five minutes.

EDW. I can't.

CLEO. You must!

EDW. I won't!

CLEO. You shall!

MOWL. "Little Jim"—

RAWK. One moment, Mowler. Sit down, everybody. (All sit.)

MOWL. (Very slowly.) "The cottage was a thatched one"—

(CLEO bursts into a convulsive laugh—MOWLER stops.)

RAWK. I think there is some mistake. My friend Mowler is a tragedian, not a lion comeek.

CLEO. Oh! excuse me. (Smothering laugh.)

RAWK. (Aside.) I do not like her laugh—

MRS. R. Is it sherry or insanity? (Aloud.)

RAWK. You are not ill, Mrs. Jellicoe?

CLEO. Never better in my life.

RAWK. Go on, Mowler. (Crosses L.)

MOWL. (In deeper tone than ever.) "Little Jim."—"The cottage was a thatched one"—

(CLEOPATRA fixes her eyes intently on MOWLER, then slowly advances towards him, and as he ceases reciting plucks a hair from his head, blows it into the air, and with a half mad laugh, watches it float away. All GUESTS exhibit great surprise at her strange conduct.)

RAWK. (Leading her back to her seat.) Sherry, I think. Better soon, I hope. (CLEOPATRA laughs very wildly.) Mad, by Jove!

MILLY. Ma, ma; I'm getting frightened.

MRS. R. Your father's to blame—not me. I didn't invite the woman.

RAWK. Edwin, do you notice anything strange about your sister?

EDW. (Crosses L.) Only that laugh—been in the family for years.

(CLEOPATRA holds up three fingers to EDWIN to indicate three minutes have gone by.)

(RAWKINS nods to MOWLER to begin again, MOWLER again taking stage.)

MOWL. "Little Jim."—

CLEO. (Rising again).—

"Thrice the brindled cat hath mewed;  
Thrice and oncè the hedge pig groaned."

RAWK. This is too bad! Really, Edwin, I must request you to keep your sister quiet.

(CLEOPATRA rises, and executes a sort of skirt dance, C., to amazement of GUESTS, and especially of MOWLER. All this business must be done by CLEOPATRA with perfect gravity, as if she was really a mad woman.)

RAWK. I will stand this no longer!

MRS. R. It's not respectable!

(CLEOPATRA breaks into a verse of comic song; then, as RAWKINS advances, changes to declamatory style. Crosses L. to RAWKINS.)

CLEO. "There's an earthquake in the clouds.

See, it's coming through the window!"

RAWK. She's raving! I'll soothe her. Help me, Emma, to soothe her—she's fair off her onion! Excuse me, Mrs. Jellicoe, but don't you think you had better go home?

CLEO. (Singing).—

"Home, sweet home, there's no place like home," &c.

RAWK. (Joining in song, as if to humor her.) Like home! (Aside.) She's coming round! Jelks, call a cab. Ask the man 'is fare to America!

JELKS. (C.) Yes, sir!

(Exit JELKS R. to E.)

RAWK. And now, dear Mrs. Jellicoe, the time has arrived when we must part. (CLEOPATRA rises and allows herself to be led C.) So glad you've enjoyed yourself. Drop in any time you're passing. Good bye! (Aside.) She's going quietly.

CLEO. (Tragically.) Farewell!

RAWK. Oh, farewell!

CLEO. (Declaiming Juliet's speech.) Farewell! who knows when we shall meet again?

RAWK. (Aside.) Never, I trust.

CLEO. I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins, that almost freezes up the heat of my life. How, if when I am laid in the tomb, I wake before the time that Romeo come to redeem me! (She advances on MOWLER, who shrinks back.) Oh, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost seeking out Romeo that did spit his body upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay! Romeo, I come! (Enter JELKS with tray C. She snatches glass from it.) This do I drink to thee!

(Exit CLEOPATRA C., tragically.)

MRS. R. She has been at the sherry.

(GUESTS having recovered from the confusion into which CLEOPATRA'S strange conduct has thrown them, talk apart.)

RAWK. (To Edwin.) What can be done; what does it mean?

EDW. (Crosses L.) Oh! the joy—the journey—the measles; been in the family for years. All the way from America—all the way by rail.

RAWK. Edwin, I do not wish to say anything unpleasant, but there's no use disguising the fact that your sister is a dangerous lunatic.

EDW. (Hopelessly confused.) Been in the family for years—all the way from measles—comes and goes, you know. (Crosses R.)

RAWK. Well, she'd better go! Take her away at once!

EDW. But the wedding to-morrow?

RAWK. Must be put off.

EDW. (Aside.) She's done it! She said she would. (Goes R.)

(Enter JELKS C.)

JELKS. Oh, sir! please there's that strange lady got into the little room amongst the wedding presents, and she's lifting the lot.

MILLY. Oh!

MRS. R. How dare she touch my things—the minx?

RAWK. Hush! She must be humored; let her have them. (Shrieks of wild laughter heard off the stage.) Where's the cab?

JELKS. At the door, sir; but the man won't go to America—says it's outside the radius.

RAWK. Tell him Colney Hatch will do; say we have a harmless, quiet, gentle lunatic to deliver as per invoice. (Exit JELKS R. to E.; fierce scream heard.) Now remember, Emma, we must humor her. No matter what she wants, let her have it—everything will be taken from her at the asylum. Go, Edwin, and fetch your maniac sister. (Exit EDWIN.)

(All listen anxiously. Silence; then a crash.)

MILLY. She's killing him. (Looking off C.)

MRS. R. I won't have no blood shed on my new carpet.

RAWK. (Looking off.) No, she's loading him with presents.

MILLY. My presents. (Comes down L.)

(Enter CLEOPATRA C. very quietly and smiling at the company. She carries in her hands a lot of presents and EDWIN follows behind, tottering beneath the weight of many more.)

EDW. (Aside to her.) It's broken off! Are you satisfied now?

CLEO. Quite! Good-bye, Mr. Porkins. Kind regards to your dear little sausages! (She sees RAWKINS' presentation plate on table, pounces upon it and adds it to EDWIN'S load—R. to E.)

MILLY. Oh, pa! she's taking your presentation.

RAWK. Let her have it; let her have it! I'll buy another.

(CLEOPATRA sees RAWKINS' portrait on easel—seizes it, then kisses it affectionately. MRS. R. urges RAWKINS not to allow this. Business.)

RAWK. (Advancing.) You can't have that!

CLEO. Can't I! then you can! (She strikes him with picture; his head comes through.)

CURTAIN.

## ACT III.

SCENE.—Coffee room at the "Compass," Bargate-on-Sea. Door to street R. C. in flat; door R. 1. E. and R. 2. 2.; former to lock or bolt. Door L. 2nd E. Table with white cloth L. and three chairs; sofa on R. sloping up stage.

(Enter MOWLER in shabby evening dress and napkin over arm. He is now a waiter, but still in every movements remains the tragedian, as in Act II.)

MOWL. (Coming C. and soliloquising.) One man in his time plays many parts! I came to Bargate on the sea to star as "The Stranger," and remained to wait on the visitors at the local hostelry! 'Tis my poverty and not my will consents. (He lays table L. in most dignified and deliberate manner.) When the management ceased to pay salaries it became a question whether I should walk home—as I have often done before—or accept an engagement as waiter. I became a menial! Pray Heaven that I may not be recognised! (Exit with salver, &c., R.)

(Enter MRS. RAWKINS L.)

MRS. R. Twenty past ten, and no Edwin. It's disgraceful. Our future son-in-law seems to pass his time in making appointments and not keeping them! It isn't for myself I care, but my poor child will be broken-hearted.

(Enter MILLY and BOB, talking. He speaks to MILLY, she laughs.)

BOB. "See how the morning ope's her golden gates,  
And takes her farewell of the glorious sun."

MRS. R. Milly, is there hegg and bacon for breakfast this morning?

MILLY. Mr. Lupton was talking of Shakespeare, ma.

MRS. R. Give me Bacon before Shakespeare.

(Enter MOWLER with coffee pot.)

MOWL. Who spoke that name?

MRS. R. What, Mr. Mowler, the tragedian?

(MR. MOWLER changes hot coffee pot to other hand, and burns his finger; then gives start.)

MOWL. Recognised! Oh! Degradation!

MILLY. Have you come to see pa?

MOWL. No; with the blush of shame mantling on my cheek, I confess—I am here as a mere mercenary. The

hand that has held the hunchback Richard's sword now grasps a napkin! (Removing cover from dish.) Aggs and bacon!

MRS. R. Won't you join us?

MOWL. The tragedian would join you, but menial may not.

(Exit MOWLER.)

BOB. (To MILLY.) After this little dejeuner, may I have the pleasure of accompanying you for a short walk?

MRS. R. I don't know what "dayjoonay" is, but I can't let Milly go out just yet.

BOB. (Rising.) You will excuse me, won't you? Back in five minutes. Just going to get a morning paper and a mouthful of ozone. (He throws kisses at MILLY and exits.)

MRS. R. Where's that father of yours? (Calling.)

MILLY. I will fetch him. (Exit.)

MRS. R. Rawkins!

RAWK. Coming, Emma! (Enter RAWKINS in very tight coat.) I asked my tailor to let me have a fit, but I didn't want a paralytic stroke—it strikes me that if one stitch were to go, the whole garment would leave me—crack—like a pricked soap bubble.

MRS. R. (Throwing herself into RAWKINS' arms.) Oh, Simon!

RAWK. Gently, Emma!

MRS. R. The day has come when we must lose our lamb!

RAWK. There are advantages even in that. She's nineteen, and our lamb has cost a tidy lot for dressing.

MRS. R. If Edwin brings any friends with him, don't forget to bow!

RAWK. I shall nod, Emma, for the best of reasons—this coat don't allow of bows without busting.

MRS. R. It breaks my heart to part with her.

RAWK. Don't unman me, Emma!

MRS. R. (Changing her tone.) Are you sure it don't hurt you?

RAWK. What?

MRS. R. That coat?

RAWK. Tightish, as I said, but it'll "give," I hope, after a little wear.

MRS. R. Are they well matched?

RAWK. What, my clothes?

MRS. R. No—Ned and our Milly. I feel as if I should never (sob) leave off (sob) crying until the day of my (sob) death!

RAWK. A lively look out for me! The worst of you women is you will weep at weddings—as if marriage was fatal to your sex—it didn't kill you, did it?

MRS. R. No. I tried to bear up bravely. (Changing tone.)



Ah! don't stoop; it looks dangerous. I must be calm and give the poor girl one last word of advice.

RAWK. We will both give her two last words of advice. It is difficult to offer parental counsel when the heart is full and the tweeds are tight, but I will do my best.

(Enter MILLY L.)

MRS. R. (Breaking out afresh.) Oh! my child. (MRS. R. and MILLY sit on sofa.) This is a solemn moment, Milly—this morning you are to be married to young Mr. Vane.

MILLY. If he don't break his appointment, like he did at the party.

MRS. R. True, child—as I was a-saying just now to your father—(suddenly to RAWKINS.) Don't sit down!

RAWK. Right! Emma, my feelings and my tailor combine to keep me on my feet!

MRS. R. Milly, you are about to leave us.

MILLY. Yes, ma!

MRS. R. In future our paths of life will lie asunder—I hope you know your duty to your future husband, dear?

MILLY. I think so, ma!

MRS. R. You have been a good girl to us, but recollect that a husband is not a mother!

RAWK. Nor a father—sometimes.

MRS. R. Simon! (To MILLY.) A husband is one to whom a woman owes blind obedience.

RAWK. Owes it, but don't always pay it.

MRS. R. Love—Honour—and Obey! These are the words you are about to pronounce. You will find no difficulty in loving him—at least for a year or two—and even honouring him, if he is liberal in his allowance—but as to obeying, I advise you to see how he behaves himself before you finally decide.

RAWK. Pretty morality to teach the child I don't think, Emma! Perhaps you will allow me to have a word. (Clearing his throat.) Hum! Hum! (Leaning on chair back.) Mattery-money is like a cheap sausage—a mystery—sometimes a delusion and a snare. In it there may be a tasty morsel you come across now and again, but there's a precious lot of gristly bits!

MRS. R. Simon!

RAWK! (To MRS. RAWKINS.) And you are one of the toughest I ever met! There are moments in the greatest men's existence when—when—that is to say—you have seen your parents home, you have observed how your mother has treated me for thirty years—

MILLY. But pa, I am only nineteen!

RAWK. Sufficient time for a sample of the whole—remember how she has treated me and treat your husband in an entirely different fashion, and you may live happily.

MRS. R. I will not have my child set against her mother!

RAWK. She shall not be launched on the world without a word of warning.

MRS. R. She needs none of your nonsensical talk.

RAWK. Beware, Emma, how you rouse the lion within me! (In a rage MRS. RAWKINS rises and crosses to RAWKINS. She hurls him backwards into seat with loud crash). Oh, Emma! (Reproachfully.) You've done it now! On our girl's wedding day, too!

MRS. R. I don't care—let there be a split between us!

RAWK. Between us! It is not between us, but behind me! (Loud knock at door.) That's Edwin, no doubt. I cannot meet my future son-in-law like this!

(Exit RAWKINS backwards to hide his accident.)

MRS. R. Ah, my dear, matrimony's like cheap pastry—tempting enough to look at, but a hollow sham when bought, and dearly paid for!

(She opens door. Enter BOB.)

BOB. Has the bridegroom arrived yet?

MRS. R. No! (Voice off calling "EMMA.") I'm coming, Simon! I am coming!

(Exit MRS. RAWKINS.)

(BOB and MILLY are silent for a moment, then they sigh simultaneously.)

(Together.) Ah!

BOB. Milly!

MILLY. Yes, Bob?

BOB. To-day we part.

MILLY. Yes, Bob.

BOB. To-morrow you will be Mrs. Edwin Vane.

MILLY. Yes, Bob.

BOB. There is one request I have to make—when you are married you promise never, never to think of me!

MILLY. Yes, Bob! (Coming closer to him.) I mean no, Bob!

BOB. It might have been different if Edwin hadn't known you first. Do you prefer a quiet country wedding like this will be, or a big town affair like your other wedding day was to have been?

MILLY. Oh! I prefer my other wedding day.

BOB. On account of the music, the breakfast, the gaiety?

MILLY. No; because then I wasn't married at all. (Sighing.) To-day I may be.

BOB. Ah! But there is still hope.

MILLY. That Edwin will arrive in time?

BOB. No; the reverse.

MILLY. It will be no reverse to me!

BOB. Really? May I ask one last kiss before I see you sacrificed at the altar?

MILLY. Yes, Bob!

BOB. One (kiss) last (kiss) kiss! (He goes on kissing her.)

(Enter MOWLER with tray to clear table.)

MOWL. This is most embarrassing! Ha! Hum! (BOB and MILLY separate.)

BOB. (Aside to MOWLER.) Do you ever have a benefit?

MOWL. As frequently as possible!

BOB. Say nothing, and when your next one comes off, send me some tickets.

MOWL. Stalls?

BOB. I don't care—only (pointing to MILLY)—mum's the word!

MOWL. These lips are sealed.

(Exit MOWLER R. Enter RAWKINS L.)

RAWK. Ten thirty, and no Edwin! (Looking at watch.) I never kept a customer waiting like this when I was a young man. Here I am ready to supply him with my primest cut, I mean child, an article I can warrant as well cured, I mean educated, for without flattery to myself she is one of the best dressed hams, I mean daughters, ever offered to the public at the price, and now, after begging for three weeks' grace, to take his lunatic sister to Colney Hatch, he disappoints us again. It certainly isn't the cheese, to say nothing of Cheddar; it's not even inferior Dutch, in the way of pottiness. It is not for myself I care, but my poor child will be broken-hearted. (BOB speaks to MILLY—she laughs loudly.) Or will be, as soon as she suspects! Milly, my dear, could you bear a blow?

MILLY. On the sea?

RAWK. No; on land—here.

MILLY. (To BOB.) I thought pa was going to propose a sail.

RAWK. You know why we are waiting here; you know for whom we are waiting. If, my darling—mind you, I only say if—this Edwin of yours were never to come at all—

MILLY. Oh, pa, have you heard any good news?

RAWK. (Aside.) Poor child, she does not suspect the young dog even now. Alas! I was brought up to the beef sausage business, and I always suspect the worst. (Aloud.) I have got a sort of a presentiment that Edwin means to play another of his tricks. (Enter MOWLER R.) What, Mowler! Whatever in the name of the "Merchant of Venus" are you doing down at Bargate?

MOWL. Do not ask me, Rawkins! (He turns away head and holds out letter.)

BOB. (Aside.) Down on his luck—taken to waiting.

RAWK. Oh! That's it, is it? (Exit MOWLER.) A letter from Edwin, no doubt. (Opens letter.) Not his writ-

ing!—what's all this? "Sir, I beg to inform you that I am unworthy of your daughter's hand!"

MILLY. } What?  
BOB. }

RAWK. "Bestow it on some person more deserving than yours respectfully, Edwin Vane." It's his signature, right enough, though the other part of the letter is not his.

BOB. I can swear to that, but here's a postscript.

RAWK. Let's have it.

BOB. "P. S.—Burn this letter before reading it."—That P. S. is in his hand.

RAWK. Edwin's taken his mad sister to Colney Hatch and caught her complaint. (Tapping forehead.)

MILLY. He's making a laughing stock of us, pa dear!

RAWK. It certainly looks like it. This is the second time he has fooled us; the first time I forgave him for his poor demented sister's sake, but now, Milly, my dear—bear up, my child—support her. Mr. Lupton, in case she faints—(BOB places arm around MILLY'S waist)—your father must exercise his iron will, and tell you that you shan't marry that fellow!

MILLY. (Clapping her hands and falling back into LUP-TON'S arms.) Oh!

BOB. Mr. Rawkins, until this moment, delicacy has sealed my lips, but now I need no longer wear a waistcoat of dissimulation to hide my beating heart. (Placing hand on breast.)

RAWK. Take care—you may catch cold. Don't unbutton!

BOB. I must unbutton—my soul! My friend, or rather my former friend Edwin, deserts your daughter. Let me fill his place; let me take whatever you propose to give as her dowry—

MILLY. Oh, do, pa!

BOB. Give your consent, and let our children, yet unborn, close your aged eyelids when you leave this world.

RAWK. Look here; if you intend to give your children my eyelids to play with—I'll never consent at all.

BOB. As you will; but only give me hope.

RAWK. Young man, what is your position in the world?

BOB. I have £400 a year and expectations at the death of my uncle, whom I'm proud to say is old and shaky.

RAWK. Um! Expectations! Four hundred uncles—old and shaky—it's a pity to disappoint my daughter, and though it's rather sudden—I'll think it over. It wants consideration. (BOB shakes his hand; MILLY kisses him. At this moment EDWIN'S voice is heard.)

EDW. In the breakfast room—thank you!

RAWK. That voice!

(Enter EDWIN C., very untidy and unshaven.)

EDW. At last!

OMNES. Edwin!!

EDW. I've kept you waiting; I know I have; but I am sure you will not be angry. Let me explain.

RAWK. You had better.

EDW. (Lovingly.) Milly, my darling!

MILLY. Don't Milly me! (Turns away.)

EDW. Bob, old boy, how can I thank you?

BOB. No occasion! (Turns away.)

EDW. What's the matter?

RAWK. Your letter's the matter! Look at it! My child's heart is not as tough as bacon rind.

EDW. Oh! I see you haven't read the postscript.

RAWK. A postscript is usually read after a letter.

EDW. True! I was wrong not to have begun with the postscript.

RAWK. Edwin, you are a bad egg! By the light of this letter I see through you, and have come to the conclusion that you are—like your sister—addled.

EDW. Addled!

RAWK. Well, cracked, if you prefer it. Why do you come here after writing this?

EDW. To marry Milly!

MILLY. Marry me!

BOB. Marry her!

RAWK. To marry she!

EDW. (Crosses L.) Yes! Ah, breakfast still on the table. I'm famished. Excuse me; I'll explain as I go on. (He sits down and eats voraciously.)

BOB.

MILLY. } How rude!

RAWK. We await your explanation! (Crosses to EDWIN.)

EDW. Ha, ha! Couldn't you see through that letter? It was only sent to pacify my sister.

RAWK. Mrs. Jellicoe?

EDW. Exactly; these poor creatures have to be humored.

RAWK. I dare say.

EDW. Sad case hers—domestic troubles—married a man—turned out a brute—took to drink—beat her, drove her mad—you saw her condition—judge for yourselves.

RAWK. But why write that letter?

EDW. Obligated to! Her own marriage unhappy—so hates marriages—wants to break off mine—she wrote that letter. Just to calm her I signed it, putting in a postscript of my own—but before I could destroy the thing she managed to drop it in the post, and that's all about it.

RAWK. (Seating himself beside EDWIN.) Um! I could not believe you meant purposely to insult us—of course these family troubles can't be avoided. Where is your sister now?

EDW. I've put her under lock and key. She won't trouble

us for some time. (Aside.) After the knot is tied, I shan't care whether she turns up again or not. Milly will be mine. But there's no time to lose—oughtn't we to be starting for church?

RAWK. Certainly, the parson will be getting impatient. Lupton!

BOB. Yes, sir.

RAWK. Order the carriages to be brought round to the door again.

BOB. (Mournfully.) I have no heart. (Crosses R.)

RAWK. Heart; pooh! You've got legs, haven't you?

BOB. At this moment they are failing me.

RAWK. Don't be an ass—there are more fish in the sea than ever came out of it. You'll find another.

BOB. It's not a fish I want—it's a girl! (Exit R. to E.)

MILLY. Oh, pa!

(RAWKINS parts them, sending BOB off C., and taking MILLY off L)

EDW. (Leaping up and dancing.) Free! Free as the air! No more false Mrs. Jellicoes, no more Cleopatras! I devised a deep-laid plan. Pretended all was off with Milly—Cleopatra hadn't a notion I was due at Bargate to be quietly married to-day. Proposed a trip to the seaside yesterday—cheap excursion—brought Cleopatra here—loaded with sandwiches, cold chicken, ham, tongue, everything calculated to make excursion life agreeable—suggested a sail—she jumped at the idea—went out to the lighthouse on the Badwin Sands—landed on the rocks—jumped into the boat, and left her there! Safe and secure! Ha, ha! She can't get off until to-morrow, when Milly will be Mrs. Vane! Cleopatra won the game last time, but now I think I've fairly turned the tables. Now for a shave; I want one badly.

(Knock, and enter MOWLER, with shaving soap, &c.)

MOWL. Mr. Rawkins! Hot water!

EDW. Hot water! I've just got out of it! Surely that face—!

MOWL. Rackognized again—humiliation!

EDW. Hullo! why, you are Rawkins' comic tragedian.

MOWL. I am an actor, sir, battling with the storms and buffets of this world.

EDW. All right. (Imitating him.) Canst thou tell me whither I may hie me whilst applying this saponaceous substance to my cuticle?

MOWL. You want to shave yourself, sir.

EDW. I do!

MOWL. No. 7's your room.

EDW. Thanks. (He waltzes round stage, lathering himself as he dances, and goes off L. to LANDLORD'S amazement.)

MOWL. His line of business is evidently light comedy—I have played it myself for forty years.

(Lady's voice heard off.)

VOICE. Walter! Walter! Are you never coming? Chambermaid! Manager! Proprietor! Anybody!

MOWL. Hullo! Another customer. A lady traveller.

(Music: "They're after me." Enter CLEOPATRA, excitedly, with small basket on arm, dressed in yachting suit and straw hat, &c.)

CLEO. I want a room—I must have a room of some sort—bed room, sitting room, dining room, billiard room, still room, coffee room, any room so long as it is a room. (Not looking at MOWLER.) Where is the waiter?

MOWL. Heah!

CLEO. Send me the boots!

MOWL. Madam, I double the "parts!"

CLEO. (Pacing up and down.) Scoundrel!

MOWL. Beg pardon?

CLEO. Mean-spirited sneak!

MOWL. Excuse me!

CLEO. Not you. (Looking at MOWLER intently; he recognizes her and recoils.) Rawkins' tame tragedian!

MOWL. (Aside.) The maniac! I must dissemble. Oh! Will you order dinner, madam?

CLEO. What could I do with a dinner?

MOWL. I don't know; some of our customers eat it.

CLEO. (Flourishing basket.) Do you know what this is full of?

MOWL. Not dynamite. (Recoiling.)

CLEO. No! Cold chicken, ham, tongue; his chicken—his ham—his tongue!

MOWL. (Aside.) Not a likely customer. (Aloud.) Anything to drink, madam?

CLEO. I dare not drink; I am too excited. Stop! Perhaps you have some iced water?

MOWL. Well—yes.

CLEO. Bring me a jug full—it will cool me.

MOWL. Carries her own victuals, and orders iced water, which we don't charge for.

CLEO. Quick!

MOWL. Certainly. (Exit.)

CLEO. Oh! I want to bite something; I feel I could scream the roof off. He left me like a scuttled ship—stranded on the Badwin Sands! It was low tide, and I made my way to the lighthouse; the man took me in as a shipwrecked traveller. I wanted him to send up rockets and signals of distress to have me fetched off by the tug, but he wouldn't—so there I had to stop until this morning, when a pilot picked me up, and brought me to the beach.

It took me hours to trace him, but I have done it; and now, Edwin, it's my turn once more.

RAWK. (Entering with napkin under chin and "property" razor in hand.) Walter—chambermaid—how much longer am I to wait for that water?

CLEO. Old Rawkins!

RAWK. (Astonished.) Mrs. Jellicoe! Escaped from Colney Hatch!

CLEO. (Fiercely.) Where is Edwin Vane?

RAWK. Don't know exactly—you see, I was shaving.

CLEO. Until you have answered me you shall shave no more! (Snatches open razor from his hand.)

RAWK. Mind; you might cut yourself!

CLEO. I am not afraid. (Flourishing razor.)

RAWK. But I am!

CLEO. (Advancing as RAWKINS retreats.) So you would let your daughter marry this miserable man!

RAWK. Yes—I mean, No!

CLEO. You would give the girl to a deceiver, who has already broken his plighted troth!

RAWK. Be calm. (Edging round stage.) She's much worse to-day.

CLEO. Calm! There will be no more calm where I am!

RAWK. I am afraid not.

CLEO. And I have come to stop!

RAWK. What a treat for me! I am so sorry your marriage turned out badly—I know—bad husband—he was a brute to beat you—he took to drink—you took to lunacy—no, I don't mean that!

CLEO. Don't babble!

RAWK. Mrs. Jellicoe—

CLEO. I am not Mrs. Jellicoe.

RAWK. (Aside.) She thinks she's somebody else, now!

CLEO. I'm Miss Cleopatra Collins, and I forbid you to let your daughter marry my Edwin, or if you do—(Flourishing razor very close to Rawkins' face.)

RAWK. He shan't—he shan't—that's settled—be calm!

CLEO. If you break your word, beware my wrath!

RAWK. It's your razor I'm afraid of.

CLEO. Now, where is he?

RAWK. In there, I think.

CLEO. Good! (Turning back.) Mind, I have your word!

RAWK. Yes—yes!

CLEO. Break it, and I'll have your life!

RAWK. So much obliged. First on the right, and mind the razor!

(At words, "Have your life," enter Mowler. As Cleopatra is going off, flourishing razor, she meets Mowler entering. He catches sight of her, drops



the tray he carries, and rushes off. Cleopatra laughs and exits.)

RAWK. That woman means mischief! Why couldn't they have kept her at Colney Hatch? I'll just turn this key and lock her in. (He locks door.) And then go off before she gets out.

(Enter Edwin.)

EDW. What is the matter, father-in-law?

RAWK. Hush!

EDW. What?

RAWK. (Mysteriously.) Not a word—this way—tiptoe—no noise—must fetch Milly—escape—follow me—explain all—hush!

CLEO. (Who enters quietly at first door on right.) The old idiot locked the other door, but—

EDW. What's the matter with Rawkins? (Laughing and imitating his exit.) Not a word—tiptoe—hush!

CLEO. (Sarcastically.) Very funny!

(Music: "They're After Me!")

EDW. (Collapsing.) Cleopatra! (Embarrassed.) Good morning; have you used—

CLEO. No soapy jokes.

EDW. Have you used—that razor on any one's throat yet?

CLEO. Not yet! So you lured me to a lighthouse, did you? You abandoned me on the rocks, did you? Sailed off gayly, and left me stranded, did you?

EDW. On my honor, the boat blew away just as you landed.

CLEO. But I have tracked you down once more—found out old Rawkins, too.

EDW. Ooh! (Groaning.)

CLEO. And had a few quiet words with him.

EDW. Enough of this! I don't intend to be intimidated. I won't marry you, so there!

CLEO. I wouldn't have you now, but you shan't marry any one else. My love has turned to hate, as you and the Rawkinses shall find.

EDW. (Assuming coolness.) Madam, I must refer you to my solicitors, Snodge and Snodge, of Lincoln's Inn.

CLEO. I have nothing to do with your solicitors. This marriage shall be stopped—here and now!

EDW. (Aside.) Better put a bold front on it. (Aloud.) Madam, I defy you!

CLEO. (Calmly.) Very well, I was prepared for that, and have a counter move ready. It's as easy as breaking your word. (She rings.)

(Enter Mowler apprehensively.)

MOWL. What will you take, madam?

CLEO. A constable!

MOWL. Custard pudding?

CLEO. A policeman!

MOWL. Policeman for one? (Exit C.)

EDW. What are you going to do?

CLEO. Give you in charge.

EDW. For what?

CLEO. Murder!

EDW. Mur—

CLEO. Der! Yes!

(Enter Mowler with policeman, a very stolid, half boatman sort of individual.)

MOWL. Policeman, madam; anything to follow?

CLEO. (Looking intently at EDWIN.) Yes, Old Bailey to follow. (To POLICEMAN.) Arrest that man, constable!

POLICE. Charge?

CLEO. Merely murder. Last night, about seven, he threw a woman into the sea from off the Badwin Sands.

EDW. Oh! what a—well, there!

MOWL. Murder most foul as at best it is!

EDW. (As POLICEMAN approaches him.) Stop, policeman. Ask this person what was the murdered woman's name? Ask this person what was the murdered woman's name?

CLEO. Her name was Cleopatra Collins.

EDW. Oh!! Any witnesses?

CLEO. Yes, policeman—I saw him do it!

EDW. Better and better! Now, my active and intelligent officer, ask her what her name is?

CLEO. I am Mrs. Jellicoe!

EDW. I swear she is not!

(Enter RAWKINS L.)

RAWK. Mrs. Jellicoe!—you've got out again!

CLEO. (Triumphantly to POLICEMAN.) There! You see I am known.

EDW. Damn!

CLEO. Now, Mr. Vane, I think I've put a stop to your marrying tricks once more. You will want Snodge and Snodge to defend you on a criminal charge. (Imitating barrister.) Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner at the bar is as innocent as a lamb. Ha ha, ha! Policeman, do your duty!

(Exit CLEOPATRA, laughing.)

RAWK. What is she jabbering about now?

(POLICEMAN and MOWLER whisper together. Exeunt.)

EDW. Father-in-law, this is getting serious.

RAWK. Getting serious! What does it all mean?

EDW. I can soon explain; come out into the open air—I'm stifled here. (He opens door—POLICEMAN is seen on guard.)

POLICE. It's no use trying to escape. I've sent for the Sergeant.

EDW. Escape!

POLICE. I shall blow my whistle if you attempt to leave.

RAWK. So I suppose the wedding is "broken off" again.

(Enter MILLY.)

MILLY. Oh, pa!

RAWK. My poor, disappointed pet!

MILLY. I am disappointed—I have lost Mr. Lupton on the parade.

EDW. An idea!

MILLY. Pa!

RAWK. Hush; Edwin 'as an idea.

EDW. We must prove to them that Cleopatra is not dead, and since the real Cleopatra says that she's not Cleopatra, we must manufacture a Cleopatra.

RAWK. I don't understand.

EDW. I am arrested—good! Call in the chuckleheaded policeman, present your daughter to him as Cleopatra, and the thing's done.

RAWK. He! he! Capital joke!

MILLY. Now I don't understand. Who is Cleopatra?

EDW. You are, my darling—only for an instant. Hush! (He opens door). Policeman! (Enter POLICEMAN.)

POLICE. What now?

RAWK. The woman who accused my son-in-law of murder was a maniac.

POLICE. Is that all?

RAWK. No, what's more to the point, the supposed murdered woman's alive.

EDW. Beyond all dispute.

RAWK. And her name is—

EDW. Cleopatra Collins! Here is the lady herself.

POLICE. Oh! Well, of course, if there's a mistake, it's all right. Since you are Miss Cleopatra Collins—

(Enter BOB LUPTON.)

BOB. Milly—(correcting himself)—ahem! Miss Rawkins!

POLICE. What d'yer say?

(RAWKINS and EDWIN make frantic signs.)

BOB. I said Miss Rawkins, and was addressing this lady, not you, bobby.

POLICE. So she's Miss Rawkins—not Miss Collins!

RAWK. (Together.) No!!

EDW.

BOB. Go on; you know she is!

POLICE. Look here; this is a rum start. I shall arrest the lot of you presently!

RAWK. (To BOB.) Fool!

EDW. (To BOB.) Ass!

MILLY. (To BOB.) Darling!

RAWK. Your friend Edwin here is accused of murdering

Cleopatra, though I thought she was dead long ago, and buried on the Thames Embankment.

BOB. (To EDWIN.) What; you have not killed that poor girl?

RAWK. You must know there is no such person in existence.

BOB. I beg your pardon, I know very well there is or there was.

RAWK. Is there—I mean was there a Cleopatra?

BOB. Of course! Her other name was Collins.

RAWK. Then Edwin has done the deed!

EDW. Father-in-law! Can you think me guilty of sororicide?

RAWK. I don't know what that is, but I believe you did it. (Exit L.)

EDW. To you I appeal, my friend, my faithful Bob—

BOB. Friend no longer!

EDW. After all, your friendship don't count for much. Look here; I own I lured Cleopatra to a lighthouse and left her there; but she's come back; she's here now!

BOB. Here now!

EDW. Yes; don't you see she has raised all this bobbery just to break off my marriage with Milly?

BOB. Just to break off your marriage?

EDW. (Effusively.) With my darling Milly!

BOB. (Vexed.) With your darling Milly!

EDW. But come, old chap, you will prevent that; you will save me?

BOB. Shall I?

EDW. Yes, you have only to swear that you know Cleopatra is Cleopatra, and therefore can't be a corpse.

BOB. (Backing out.) Don't ask me to say that—um—my conscience—you know—my scruples.

EDW. Oh, you beauty!

BOB. (With dignity.) I beg you will excuse me. Good day. We may meet at the trial.

(Exit BOB LUPTON.)

EDW. Well, if this isn't trial enough. I believe he's spoons on my wife that is to be. Why not escape—one dash for liberty. (Goes to door and finds POLICEMAN still on guard.)

POLICE. Delâz thêre, messmate—stow that!

EDW. (Going R.) This way, perhaps.

(Enter CLEOPATRA.)

CLEO. I've left my tongue behind. (Looking for basket.)

EDW. I wish you had left your tongue behind when you came here to ruin me. Cleo, what do you want?

CLEO. Chicken! (Looking round.)

EDW. This is no time for endearing phrases. What will you take?

CLEO. Some mustard.

EDW. How much, I mean.

CLEO. Half-a-pound.

EDW. If I married you I should only lead you a life; I might beat you.

CLEO. (Cutting a sandwich.) May I offer you a ham sandwich?

EDW. Only speak up and say you are not killed.

CLEO. Never, until this marriage is broken off!

EDW. Don't fancy that if it is broken off that I shall marry you!

CLEO. Who wants you to marry me? (Singing.) "‘Nobody axed you, sir,’ she said!" Ha, ha! It will be a breach of promise case, and I shall recover thumping damages. Before I'd marry you, you would have to go down on your knees in public and beg me to have you, and then I wouldn't. (She spitefully bites sandwich.) What do you say to that? Ha, ha, ha!

EDW. Be careful!

CLEO. (Coolly eating sandwich.) Ha, ha!

(EDWIN rings. Enter MOWLER.)

MOWL. Sir, did you agitate the tintinnabulator?

EDW. I rang because I have a confession to make. Fetch the policeman.

MOWL. Policeman for one! (He goes to door. C.)

EDW. No; policeman for two!

(Enter POLICEMAN.)

Constable, I confess I did the deed!

POLICE. (To MOWLER.) You hear that?

EDW. Yes; and I had an accomplice. There she sits, eating ham sandwiches.

POLICE. But this lady charged you!

EDW. To divert suspicion from herself.

POLICE. What do you say, mum?

CLEO. It's quite true. We killed Cleopatra Collins between us!

POLICE. This is an important case. I don't like to act alone, so I've sent to wake up my sergeant. When he comes you will both have to go to the lock-up.

CLEO. (Aside.) Not much got by that move, Mr. Vane!

(Enter RAWKINS, Mrs. RAWKINS, MILLY and BOB.)

MOWL. They have both confessed!

RAWK. Both!

MOWL. Yes; this lady owns she helped him to do the deed.

BOB. (Aside.) Helped to kill herself! Ha, ha, ha!

RAWK. All is over! Mr. Lupton, take my daughter; she's yours!

MRS. R. Oh! you bad young man!

EDW. Stop! I give up Milly; but Bob, speak, for Heaven's sake—say what you know!

BOB. I know nothing!

EDW. One last appeal to you——

CLEO. What would be the use if I told this old saveloy man that I was Cleopatra, whom you made a fool of by promising to marry years before you met his daughter. He wouldn't believe me—would you? (To Rawkins.)

RAWK. Considering that I know you are Mrs. Jellicoe——

CLEO. Even if I confessed I came to your house last week on purpose to break off the marriage, you would not believe that, either?

RAWK. No! Dear lady, I know how your filbert's afflicted. (Tapping forehead.) Marriage—brute of a husband—drink—lunacy—Tootletum-too—sad case—been in the family for years.

CLEO. (To Mrs. RAWKINS.) And you would not believe me, either, would you?

MRS. R. Don't address me—creature!

CLEO. And you, Mr. Policeman?

POLICE. I never believe nothing!

CLEO. (To EDWIN.) You see, you have woven your own net, and now I cannot get you out of it.

EDW. Oh, I'm done for.

(Enter MOWLER.)

MOWL. Hold! Here I have an answer to a telegram I despatched in order to clear up the mystery: "No woman was killed yesterday on the Badwin Sands; the lady who landed was rowed ashore by a pilot this morning."

EDW. (Leaping up.) Hufrah! Rawkins' family, you are a lot of donkeys!

RAWK. Be careful!

MRS. R. Simon, bring an action against him for "alibi!"

EDW. This little woman is worth all of you in a bunch, with Lupton thrown in. I've treated her badly; I confess, because I wanted your mincemeat money; but it is not too late; I will make reparation. I always loved you, Cleopatra, even when I was persuaded to play you false. You are worth a million Millys.

MILLY. That's because I wouldn't have you!

EDW. Cleopatra, I never cared much for Milly Rawkins, and I always hated her porky parents—but there, I suppose you won't have me now?

CLEO. I said I would never marry you unless——(She whispers to Edwin, who at once drops on his knees.)

EDW. I do ask you—is this enough? (Cleopatra raises him to his feet.) I wish we could be married before the others.

CLEO. We can—let's get a special license at the Stores!

EDW. I forgive you, Bob—send us a slice of your wedding pork pie. We will give you a bit of our cake.

MRS. R. Going to marry his lunatic sister!

RAWK. What a family!

(Enter MOWLER in tall white hat, black band, fur overcoat; carries carpet bag.)

Ah, here's Mowler! Mowler, give us that "ressertation!"

(Music; piano.)

MOWL. With pleasure! Fortune once more smiles on me. I have an offer from the T. R., Puddleton—I open as Romeo. (Applause. Taking stage and clearing throat.) "Little Jim."

RAWK. Hear, hear!

MOWL. "The cottage was a thatched one"——

(CLEOPATRA advances toward him, feigning madness, as she did in Act II., and snatches off his wig, revealing bald head—he rushes off centre.)

RAWK. It was thatched once, but it ain't now.

EDW. Rawkins' family, my breach of promise case isn't coming into court.

CLEO. No; this is the court I appeal to. A court where no jurors are prejudiced, no judges unjust! Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard the evidence—I leave the case with confidence in your hands, and I hope your verdict will be in favour of—

"MISS CLEOPATRA."

(CURTAIN.)

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